



## COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

<b>Name of Responsible Manager / Head Teacher:</b>	Mr John D F Martin
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Ms Rebecca Willmouth
<b>Date of Policy Approval by Governing Body:</b>	October 2016
<b>Date of last Policy Review:</b>	October 2016
<b>Date of next Policy Review:</b>	October 2018

### General Complaints Procedure - Guidance for Staff and Parents

The aim of our school is to provide the highest educational opportunity for children within a warm and secure environment where their views and feelings are considered and they can flourish as individuals.

It is important to us that we work with parents to provide this environment and that issues which may be affecting your child's time in school are dealt with quickly and effectively. We would therefore ask that if you have a complaint or concern, you contact us as soon as possible so that the matter can be resolved quickly.

This policy is intended to allow you to raise a concern or complaint relating to the school, or the services that it provides. Wherever possible, an informal resolution is attempted. The complaints procedure is designed to be investigatory rather than adversarial. Parents should feel confident that making a complaint will not adversely affect their child. To enable a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be brought to the attention of the school as soon as possible. In general, any complaints not raised within 3 months of the issue will not be considered.

This procedure does not apply to complaints about:

- School admissions and transfers
- Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Matters likely to require a Child Protection investigation
- Exclusion of children from school
- Staff grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Financial impropriety or other criminal activity
- Employment
- Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use the school's premises or facilities.

In these cases, there are other separate and statutory procedures.



## **Stage 1: Informal Approach**

### **Class teacher**

Most concerns or complaints can be sorted out by speaking to your child's teacher directly. If you feel the matter can be dealt with quickly, teachers are usually available at the end of each school day. If you know you would like a longer time slot (more than 5 minutes) please make an appointment at the school office.

We will always try to see you as soon as possible and aim to acknowledge notes or phone calls on the same day. If you need to communicate with a member of staff before school on an important issue, please phone and make an early appointment as we cannot see parents once the children have started to come into school.

Members of staff have their own tracking system in the Welfare Files to ensure that all complaints are processed and that action is taken.

### **Head of Year**

If you feel the concern is of a serious nature and you have already spoken to the class teacher, you may wish to contact the Head of Year where your concern will be followed up.

### **Deputy Head Teacher**

If you still feel a concern remains unresolved or on-going, then the next stage would be to make an appointment to speak to the deputy head teacher. You will receive a telephone call or written reply regarding your concern within a week. All complaints will be noted in the deputy tracking file so that all complaints are dealt with fully.

## **Stage 2: Head Teacher**

If the issue is not resolved through any of the steps at stage 1, you can write to the Head teacher or make an appointment to explain the situation. The Head teacher will meet with you and conduct an investigation into the problem. You will receive a telephone call or written reply to your concern within a week.

For parents of children with Special Education Needs please refer to section 11 of the Special Education Needs Policy for additional support and information.

## **Stage 3: Chair of Governors**

If your concern is about an action or decision of the Head teacher, then you should refer it to the Chair of Governors in writing via the school's office. The Chair of Governors will



arrange a meeting to discuss your concern and you will receive a written reply within a week. *Complaints shared within the whole Governing Body will not name the individuals in case an appeal panel needs to be constituted.*

#### **Stage 4: Governor's Complaints Panel**

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcomes and wish to pursue the complaint, the Chair of Governors will arrange a meeting of the Governors' Complaints Panel, who will investigate your concern. The request should be made in writing to the clerk to the governing body, via the school office and should include:

- The nature of the original complaint
- The steps already taken by the head teacher or designated member of staff to deal with the matter and the head teacher's response
- The Chair of Governors' response
- Reasons for pursuing the complaint beyond the Chair of Governors.

The school will notify the Local Authority of a parent's request and copy the relevant information to the lead professional at county.

#### **The complaints panel meeting**

The clerk will arrange a meeting within 20 days of the request and inform parents about the process and agenda. The complaints panel will consist of three governors with no previous involvement in the matter. For complaints specifically about the National Curriculum, Religious Education and related matters, members will, where possible, be drawn from the governors' curriculum committee. Parents will be given the opportunity to submit additional supporting information prior to the meeting. The panel will then meet with all parties to consider both written and oral submissions.

A typical agenda would be:

- Introductions
- Oral submissions by the complainant
- Questions from the school
- Oral response by the Head teacher and Chair of Governor
- Questions by the complainant
- Brief summary by the complainant, with no new information
- Brief summary by the school, with no new information

Parents will then be notified of the panel's decision in writing within a fortnight.

#### **Stage 5: Local Authority (LA)**

If a parent is not satisfied with the action or decision of the chair of governors' complaints panel, they may appeal to the Hampshire County Council. The letter of complaint should be



sent to Children's Services Complaints Team they will remain responsible for managing your complaint and will be your point of contact from that point.

Children's Services Complaints Team  
County Education Office  
The Castle  
Winchester  
SO23 8UG

### **Unreasonably persistent complainants**

The great majority of people with complaints or concerns about the school behave reasonably in pursuing their complaint. However, a small number of complainants may be deemed "unreasonably persistent complainants". An unreasonably persistent complainant is a person who complains about issues, either formally or informally, or frequently raises issues that he/she considers to be within the remit of the school and whose behaviour is unreasonable. Such behaviour may be characterised by:

- actions which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious
- prolific correspondence or excessive e-mail or telephone contact about a concern or complaint
- an insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic or unreasonable outcomes
- an insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner.

### **Deciding whether a complainant should be deemed an unreasonably persistent complainant**

Only the Head Teacher, with the agreement of the Chair of Governors, may deem a complainant an unreasonably persistent complainant. The Head Teacher will ensure that there is sufficient evidence available to justify the decision. He/she will consult the Authority's Legal Services to confirm that the evidence is sufficient.

### **Procedure for Dealing with Unreasonably Persistent Complainants**

The Head Teacher will write to the complainant to explain the decision and the way that future complaints will be dealt with. Any restrictions imposed will be appropriate and proportionate.

Some or all of the following actions maybe taken, depending on the particular circumstances of the case:

- insisting that no member of staff should meet the complainant on his/her own
- restricting telephone calls from the complainant to specified days and times



- requiring that all future contacts with the school are in writing, except in emergencies; this includes contacts with members of the Governing Body, who should only be contacted at the school address
- merely acknowledging correspondence from the complainant that raises issues that have already been dealt with
- after consulting the Authority's Legal Services, banning the complainant from the school premises where the complainant's behaviour constitutes a nuisance or disturbance, with any appointments with staff to be agreed in writing via the Head Teacher.

This policy has been reviewed in accordance with Section 29 of the Education Act 2002.

## Complaints Form

<b>Name of complainant:</b>	
<b>Contact details:</b>	<b>Address:</b>
	<b>Telephone:</b>
	<b>Email:</b>
<b>Nature of concern - please include as much information as possible:</b>	
<b>Have you discussed the matter already with a member of staff, if so who? What was the outcome?</b>	
<b>What would you like to happen as a result of your complaint?</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	